

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for use with a system storing digital media records and comprising a search engine searching said stored digital media records, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving different search requests from users;

logging the different search requests;

expanding the logged search requests;

applying a statistical clustering algorithm to the expanded logged search requests based on content of the expanded logged search requests, thereby grouping similar search requests together;

identifying, using a semantic net hierarchy, a lowest-level term in the hierarchy that subsumes all queries in a grouping of search requests; and

communicating the identified term to a user.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the expanding is performed using a thesaurus.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the expanding is performed using a semantic net comprising synonyms and super-terms.

4. (Currently Amended) A method for use with a system storing digital media records and comprising a search engine searching said stored digital media records, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving different search requests from users;

performing, by the search engine, searches based upon the different search requests, yielding respective search results, each search result defining selected digital media records, the digital media records each having associated metadata;

logging the search results and the metadata associated with digital media records selected therein;

expanding the metadata, defining expanded query metadata results;

applying a statistical clustering algorithm based on content of the expanded query metadata results, thereby grouping similar expanded query metadata results together;

identifying, using a semantic net hierarchy, a lowest-level term in the hierarchy that subsumes all of the expanded query metadata results in the grouping of expanded query metadata results; and

communicating the identified term to a user.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the expanding is performed using a thesaurus.

6. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the expanding is performed using a semantic net comprising synonyms and super-terms.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for use with a system storing digital media records and comprising a search engine searching said stored digital media records, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving different search requests from users;

performing, by the search engine, searches based upon the different search requests, yielding respective search results, each search result defining selected digital media records or being empty;

logging the search requests for which the search result is empty;

expanding the logged search requests;

applying a statistical clustering algorithm to the expanded logged search requests based on content of the expanded logged search requests, thereby grouping similar search requests together; and

communicating a group of search requests to a user.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein the expanding is performed using a thesaurus.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein the expanding is performed using a semantic net comprising synonyms and super-terms.

10. (Currently Amended) A method for use with a system storing digital media records and comprising a search engine searching said stored digital media records, the system permitting user expressions of interest in particular stored digital media records, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving different search requests from users;

performing, by the search engine, searches based upon the different search requests, yielding respective search results, each search result defining selected digital media records;

receiving expressions of interest from users with respect to selected digital media records;

logging the search requests for which a user has expressed interest in a selected digital media record;

expanding the logged search requests;

applying a statistical clustering algorithm to the expanded logged search requests based on content of the expanded logged search requests, thereby grouping similar search requests together;

communicating a group of search requests to a user.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the expanding is performed using a thesaurus.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the expanding is performed using a semantic net comprising synonyms and super-terms.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein a user expressing interest in a selected digital media record comprises the user placing the selected digital media record into an online shopping cart.

14. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein a user expressing interest in a selected digital media record comprises the user purchasing rights to use the selected digital media record.

15. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein a user expressing interest in a selected digital media record comprises the user placing the selected digital media record into an online projects folder or other work space.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the identifying comprises identifying, using a semantic net hierarchy, a lowest-level linguistic term in the hierarchy that subsumes all queries in a grouping of search requests.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 4, wherein the identifying comprises identifying, using a semantic net hierarchy, a lowest-level linguistic term in the hierarchy that subsumes all of the expanded query metadata results in the grouping of expanded query metadata results.

18. (New) The method of Claim 1, comprising: identifying, using the semantic net hierarchy in combination with term frequency in a reference corpus, a lowest level term in the hierarchy that subsumes all queries in a grouping of search requests.